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The Sketch

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The Sketch

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ROYAL BARD: "ELIZABETH OF WINDSOR."

PRINCESS ELIZABETH *was initiated into the mystic Gorsedd of Bards of Britain at the Welsh National Eisteddfod. Wearing the emerald-green robe of a novitiate, her Royal Highness is seen holding out both hands to the* **ARCHDRUID "CRYS"** *at the foot of the Logan Stone, on a mountainside above the village of Mountain Ash. The Recorder had prepared an English version of the Gorsedd ritual for the use of the Princess, on whom was conferred the bardic title of "Elizabeth of Windsor."*

MOTLEY NOTES.

By ALAN KEMP.

"Don't you think, darling, it 's time you let people forget you won the 'Holidays-at-Home' Bathing Girl Competition?"

DRAWN BY BARRY APPLEBY.

The Great Open Spaces.

That amusing American observer of our funny little ways, Mr. Paul Gallico, has discovered the secret of the British character. He knows why we win our wars and how we managed to stand the blitzes. He has been watching a couple of couples camping out at the seaside amid all the joys of the British summer. For a week they were rained on, blown on, and very nearly snowed on — anyhow, frozen night and day as stiff as a side of imported beef. They folded up their tents like the Arabs and silently stole away, just as the sun began to come through the clouds. Mr. Gallico was at first inclined to pity, if not to patronise, them; but now the scales have fallen from his eyes. He perceives that this foursome have had a splendid holiday, and will go on talking about it for the rest of the year, to the point of boring all the neighbours. Mr. Gallico now sees that any weakling can camp, and live close to nature, in fine, bright weather. It takes *character* to camp in British weather. Not mere idle pleasure, but stern, morale-building discipline—in short, Strength through Pneumonia—that is the keynote of the national seaside holiday.

The Battle of the Beaches.

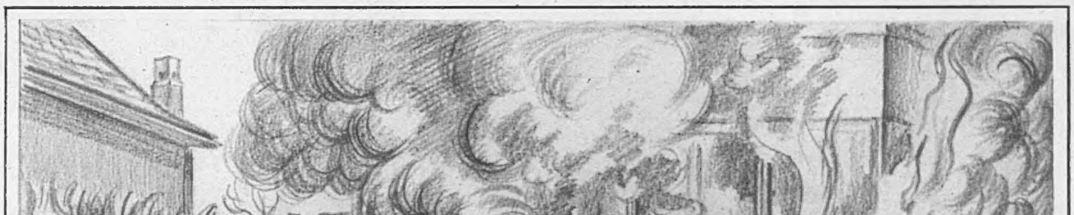
I am always ready to recognise superior intelligence when I see it, and, curiously enough, I always find it in people who happen to agree with me. I am happy, therefore, to pay tribute to Mr. Gallico's profound penetration, because I have always said that a nation which can stand the English seaside in the holiday season can stand anything whatever. Life has no further terrors for it, fortitude no further trials. If Mr. Gallico wishes to pursue his researches into this form of self-affliction, as a phenomenon of mass-psychology (I use the language of the experts), he has only to go to any "resort" and watch the ranks of the people sleeping on the sand (or shingle) and in air-raid shelters and under piers and groynes, or the merrymakers being sick all the way to the Isle of Man or the Channel Islands, or the Irrepressibles queueing up for the trains which will eventually bear them, with every known form of physical torment, to the Sands of Heart's Desire. It is one of the most remarkable spectacles in the world. No wonder Mr. Churchill said they would fight on the beaches! They have been training for it all their lives.

The Crooked Places.

Mr. Gallico is also worried about our motoring habits, and particularly about our roads. He does not think much of the rolling English drunkard—anyhow, not as a road-maker. He likes his roads straight and visible for hundreds of yards, and he can see no charm in our serpentine highways and our lavish double-hairpin bends. Now, that is unimaginative of him. He frankly says that his main anxiety, when weaving through and round our country roads, is to reach his destination alive. He seems to confuse a winding road with a winding sheet. He does not see that our tortuous thoroughfares, where, almost every hundred yards, some homicidal maniac may come charging round on the wrong side of a blind corner, breed a fine contempt of death and danger, which has won us many battles, even if it has produced rather depressing posters. Anyhow, Mr. Gallico mustn't try to *straighten things out* in England. That, surely would lead to the utmost confusion in our national life and character.

London Stormed.

To revert, however, to more innocent forms of holiday diversion, it seems that the mad pursuit of pleasure has infected even the insect world. Especially ants. Countless millions of flying ants decided that London was a better resort than the seaside for a beano, and, in the present crowded state of the metropolis, their holiday plans caused considerable congestion. It is understood that these summer trippers consist principally of queens, with a few companions (or consorts) curtly, and somewhat contemptuously, described by Our Scientific Correspondent as "males." After the holiday (according to the same authority) the queens bite off their giddy, frivolous wings and settle down to the serious business of life, which is



"Good news, Sir! At *last* the man 's come with the coal!"

DRAWN BY SILENUS.

founding new dynasties. And what happens to the males ? All we are told is that "they die." Just like that. By request, no flowers. It is greatly to be hoped that these strange holiday habits will not become general.

And Scotland Liberated.

Human beings are extraordinarily selfish about the holidays of creatures less favoured than themselves. The recent presence of the flying ants was openly and even bitterly resented by many dog-in-the-manger Londoners. In Scotland the view has prevailed that it is impossible to enjoy a summer holiday at all, because so many of the inhabitants (I mean, of course, of the insect species) descend upon and sting all visitors. Scientists, however, have again come to the rescue. After allowing themselves to be stung into picturesque patterns of spots, lumps and blisters, and after poisoning themselves with a great variety of noxious lotions and unguents, they have discovered a substance, known (mercifully) for short as D.M.P., which defies and defeats anything on wings that stings. What with D.D.T. and D.M.P., the outlook for the Lilliputians of nature is bleak. I am sorry for them, but it *is* nice to know that one can spend a few weeks in Scotland without being bitten to death.

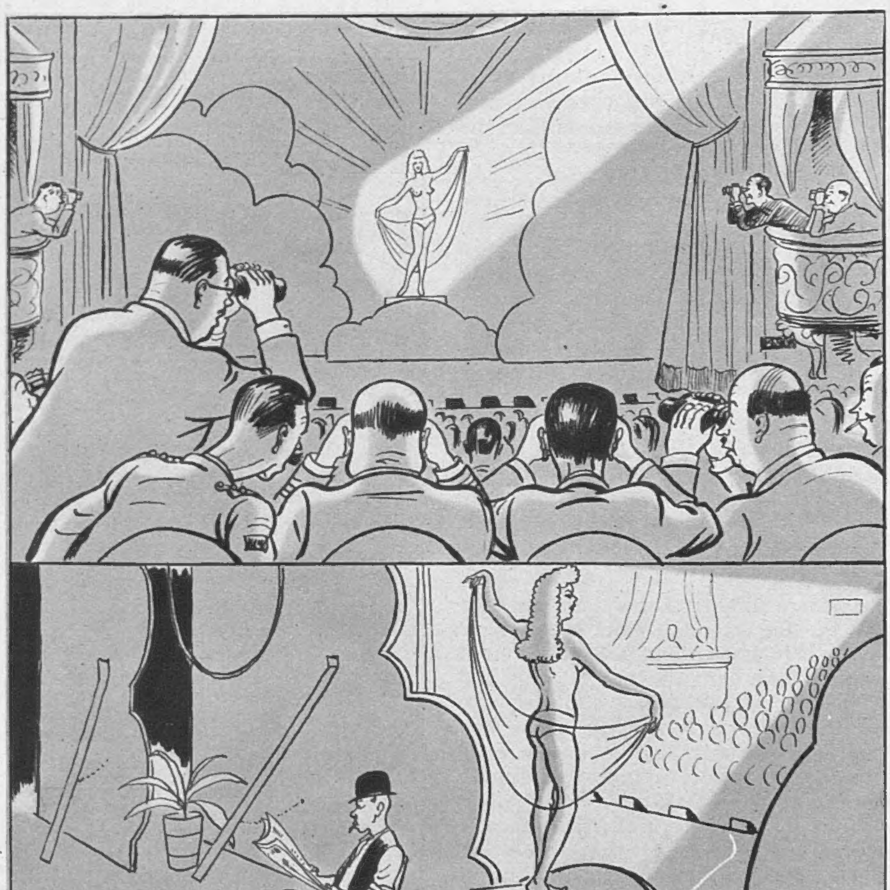
True Inwardness.

This is not the only encouraging news from across the Border. The thought of Porridge on Points severely shook a nation not easily shaken, but at least haggis has received its Magna Charta. More than that, a Parliamentary Under-Secretary has attempted what is believed to be the first definition of haggis in history (I forget exactly what it was, but perhaps that is just as well). I never quite understand why haggis should be (according to the point of view) an object either of derision, veneration or execration. I was sorry, for example, to observe "Beachcomber," whom I had thought to be a large-minded man, referring to it not long ago in wrongly hostile terms. True, I have not tasted haggis very often, but when I first did so I expected it, from all I heard, to take the roof off my mouth and the skin off my tongue. Actually, I found it rather insipid. Perhaps I had not drunk enough neat whisky with it to bring out the flavour, because they do say that the more neat whisky you take with a haggis, the more the flavour improves. Yes, but then that would be true of the flavour of almost anything, wouldn't it ? In fact, after a certain point, flavour wouldn't matter. Possibly that is the real charm of haggis for its devotees.

"There 's a good boy! . . . Shut your eyes and open your mouth and see what the nice man has for you!" [DRAWN BY WAIN.]

The Noes Have It.

Anyhow, the decision about haggis is a very good example of the British (including Scottish) genius for compromise. And that is a very important affair just now. "We must," says Mr. Byrnes, "compromise again." I am reminded of one of George Ade's now-forgotten fables. When the first Ade Junior arrived there was a deadlock about his name. Pop wanted to call him George and Momma wanted to call him John. "So," records Pop, "we compromised, and called him John." That seems to be Mr. Molotov's idea of compromise and conciliation, but it does not seem to be Dr. Evatt's. He regards Mr. Molotov as the only man in the battalion who keeps step—with himself, of course. Dr. Evatt is a lawyer, and he may remember another strong-minded individual — the dissenting juryman who said that he had never met eleven such obstinate men in his life. Mr. Molotov and Mr. Gromyko observe at least half the scriptural injunction. They swear not at all ; their nay is nay ! But is their yea ever anybody else's yea ? Apparently not. I suppose that if you go on shaking your head long enough, it becomes a sort of St. Vitus' Dance and your neck-muscles just can't do a nod.



FAMILIARITY BREEDS CONTEMPT.

DRAWN BY RAYMOND GROVES.

Two and Two Make Five.

Though some may become discouraged by what Thomas Carlyle called the Everlasting Nay, it is very gratifying to us all to know that "Stalin is optimistic about the prospects of peace." He must be a better mathematician than most of us, because the principal difficulty about peace seems to be arithmetic—anyhow, the delegates at Paris have spent most of their time, up to date, in doing sums to which they cannot find the answer. Can anybody tell me what a "simple" majority is ? It may be all sorts of things, but it obviously isn't simple. Can a simple majority authorise a two-thirds majority or is a two-thirds majority necessary to authorise a simple majority and ought you not to have at least a three-quarters majority to establish a two-thirds majority—in short, is the whole greater than the part, and if so, what part ; or the part greater than the whole, and if so, which whole ?

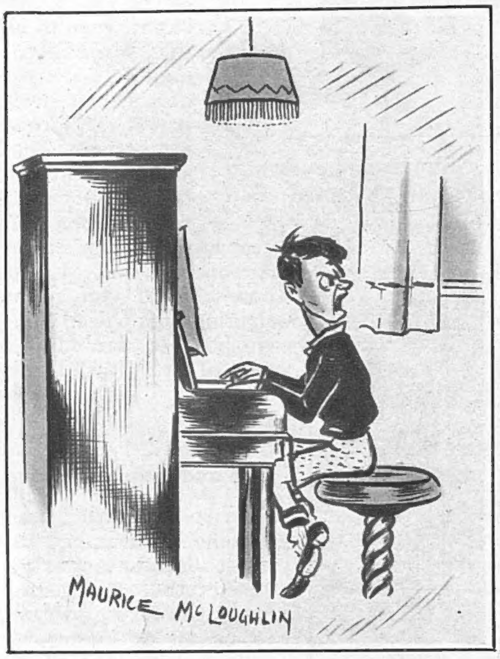
[*Continued overleaf.*

The one-hundred-and-forty-eighth of our SERIES OF PLATES IN FULL COLOUR *published in this issue of "The Sketch" is by* DAVID WRIGHT.

It is a fascinating subject, and when the representatives of the nations can spend weeks in discussing it, we may feel confident that the settlement of minor issues such as world-government, will be child's-play to them.

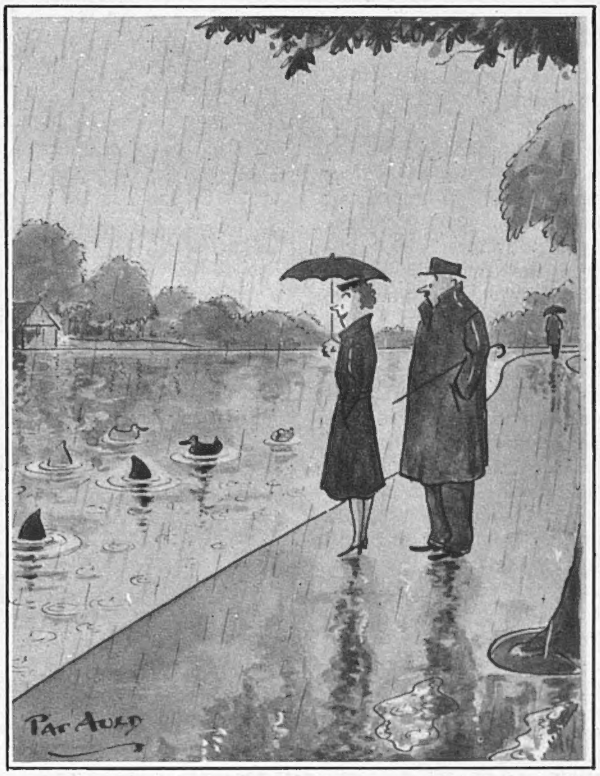
The Goldfish Standard.

In other directions also the prospects for suffering humanity are brightening up. We are discovering that we can cure many of our ills not by taking medicines or paying doctors' fees, but by performing improbable and heroic feats. For example, a baby which seemed to be destined prematurely for heaven by whooping-cough, has been cured by being flown *nearly* to heaven, but not quite; and a man has been cured of asthma by nearly electrocuting himself by accident. In contrast with these kill-or-cure methods is the new, restful treatment for neurasthenia. It consists in studying goldfish. People who feel that life is not worth living just sit and watch goldfish swimming in a bowl and balm



" . . . but Chopin hadn't arranged to play cricket in the park at six o'clock ! "

DRAWN BY MAURICE MCLOUGHLIN.



" I suppose they do that to stop their heads getting wet." [DRAWN BY PAT AULD.]

gradually pours into their souls — or else, I imagine, they begin to swim about in glass bowls themselves, and then the specialists really know what to do with them. There seems to be some peculiar magic about the goldfish. There is a character in James Thurber —a professional billiard-player— who could not play unless he held a wet goldfish in his hand between innings. That is my difficulty—I suspect that goldfish-watching might lead to goldfish-holding or even snatching, a social habit which might get one into difficulties.

Do Oysters Bark ?

It would be interesting to know how goldfish are affected by the moon. You may think the question rather far-fetched, but I have been reading in one of our more omniscient journals that herrings are very sensitive to lunar influence. The shoals, I learn, are importantly affected by the date of the full moon. It seems also that eels, being evidently rather superstitious, will not make their well-known migration to the Sargasso Sea unless the moon is in the right quarter. Then, again, " oysters and mussels open their shells and feed at the exact moment the moon passes over the meridian on which they lie." This raises the interesting question : Do oysters bark ? A dog opens its mouth, not necessarily to feed, but definitely to bark, at the exact moment the moon passes over the meridian on which it lies. If dogs, why not oysters ? Conger eels bark (I have heard them), doubtless with particular purity of tone at the full moon. Again, why not oysters ? Or possibly they yodel, because I see that Miss Jean Colin has a Basenji dog which, though it cannot bark, can yodel, make noises like an owl, and mew and lick its paws like a cat. All we need now is a barking cat and a purring parrot.

The New Snobbery.

This, as everybody knows, is the Democratic Age, but one could wish that democracy did not sometimes develop such a morbid class-consciousness. A bad example of it is the new fashion by which we are not allowed in print to distinguish between professional and amateur cricketers. Does anybody, in these days, imagine that a man is a social outcast because he plays a game for money, or, conversely, that a man is a superior being because he plays it for fun (not always unaccompanied by perquisites) ? Cricket is the only game, so far as I know, in which professionals and amateurs habitually play together, and, if there is to be any snootiness, I should have thought that the professionals would insist on *their* status, as against the mere dilettantes.

Wonderful World.

The late Khumar of Bhowal scores full marks in the Wonderful World by being reft from a funeral pyre, losing his memory, wandering about for many years as a beggar, and putting writers of fiction completely out of business. He even stole the short-story-writer's ironic finale by enjoying his exalted status for only four days, after litigating for it most of his life. — It is now revealed that aniseed balls, drilled out and stuffed with explosive charges and mechanism, were used during the war to sink ships. It is doubtful whether, even with an explosive charge, they could sink a British schoolboy.

The coming-of-age of the National Playing Fields Association was celebrated in the grand manner by a dinner at the Mansion House. Representatives in practically every field of sport, City magnates, Service celebrities, politicians, attended in force. The public spirit and energy behind the efforts of the N.P.F.A. were emphasised by the chairman and Hon. Treasurer, Sir Noel Curtis-Bennett, who was supported by several speakers, including the Lord Mayor.

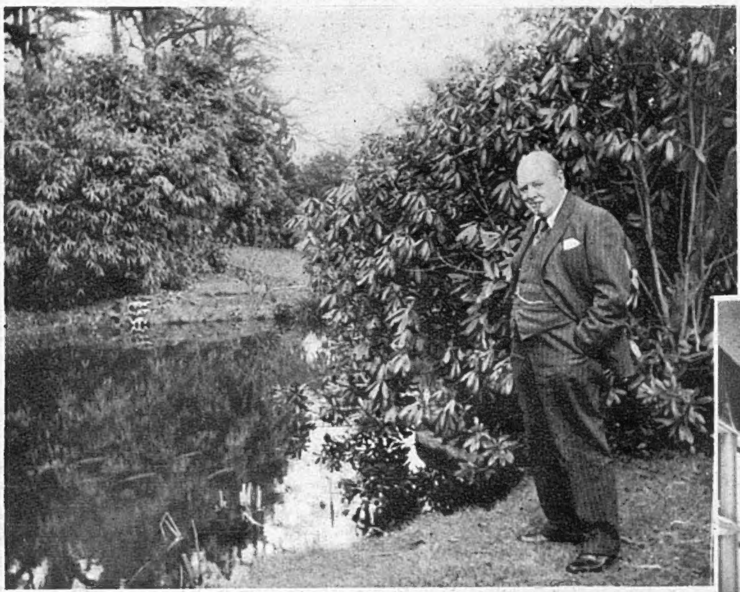
GO ON SAVING PAPER : IT IS STILL ESSENTIAL.

SISTER-IN-LAW TO THE DUCHESS OF GLOUCESTER.

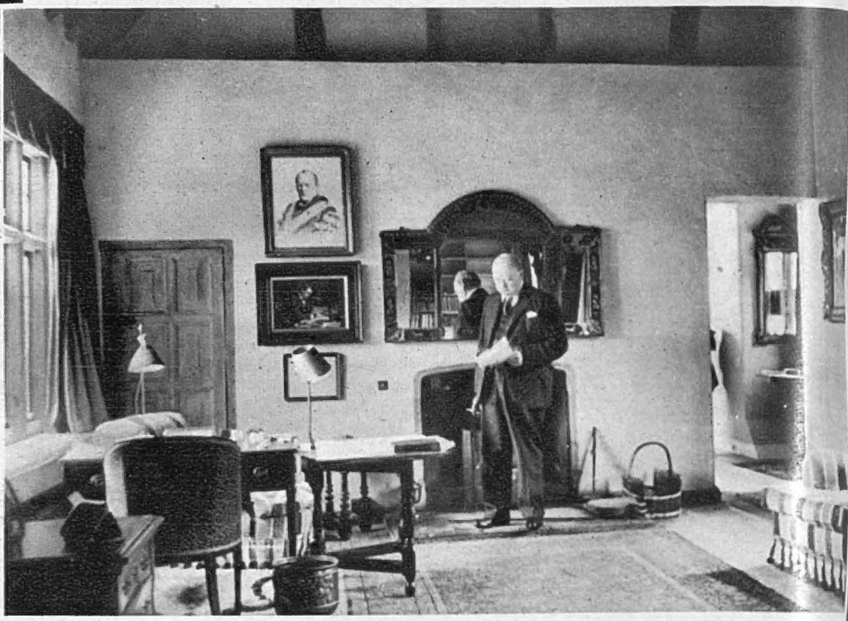
LADY GEORGE MONTAGU-DOUGLAS-SCOTT *is the wife of Colonel Lord George Montagu-Douglas-Scott, youngest brother of the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry, and of H.R.H. the Duchess of Gloucester. She is the only daughter of Lieut.-Colonel H. O. Bishop, and as Miss Molly Bishop, was well known for her pencil portraits. She married Lord George Scott in 1938 and has three children, Georgina, Charmian and baby David, born last year, with whom she has been enjoying a delightful seaside holiday in Sussex.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY PEARL FREEMAN.

A GROUP of friends of Mr. Churchill have purchased from him the house and estate of Chartwell Manor, for presentation to the National Trust as a permanent memorial to the services of Mr. Churchill to this country. The gift will include an endowment fund for maintenance. Mr. Churchill will continue to live at Chartwell and last week his flag as Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports flew there. He is the 158th holder of this office, was appointed in 1941 and his installation took place on August 14 at Dover. Normally the flag is flown at the Lord Warden's official residence, Walmer Castle. Chartwell is an old manor-house and the estate consists of some 80 acres. It was there that in 1928 Mr. Churchill, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, indulged his hobby of bricklaying. Features of Chartwell include a floodlit swimming-pool and a large studio.



Beside one of the decorative ponds in the gardens: MR. WINSTON CHURCHILL *at his country home, Chartwell Manor, Westerham, Kent, where his flag as Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports was flown last week.*



MR. CHURCHILL *in his study. He has lived at Chartwell for twenty-four years, and has promised to leave to the nation a large number of articles of historic interest which the house now contains.*

Chartwell Manor, which has been purchased for the National Trust by a group of Mr. Churchill's friends, and will eventually be a permanent memorial to the great part which he has played in British—and world—history.

Another view of Chartwell, which will remain the residence of Mr. Churchill and his family during his lifetime and will then pass to the National Trust as a permanent memorial to our great war leader.

The entrance to Chartwell Manor, showing Mr. Churchill's flag as Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports flying there. The flag is normally flown at Walmer Castle, the official residence of the Lord Warden.

CHURCHILL AT CHARTWELL—HIS PRESENT HOME AND FUTURE MEMORIAL.

Henrietta is on holiday. She will resume her letters on her return.

DEVAS PORTRAIT OF VISCOUNTESS COWDRAY.

VISCOUNTESS COWDRAY, *who has just been painted by Anthony Devas, is the younger daughter of the fifth Earl of Bradford. Her marriage to the second Viscount Cowdray took place in 1939, and she has one son, the Hon. Michael Orlando Weetman Pearson, born in 1944, and two daughters. Lord Cowdray, who succeeded to the title in 1933, served in the war from 1939-1940 and was severely wounded. From 1941-42 he was Parliamentary Secretary to the Under-Secretary of State for Air. The little dog in the picture was, Mr. Devas says, an excellent sitter and held the pose perfectly.*

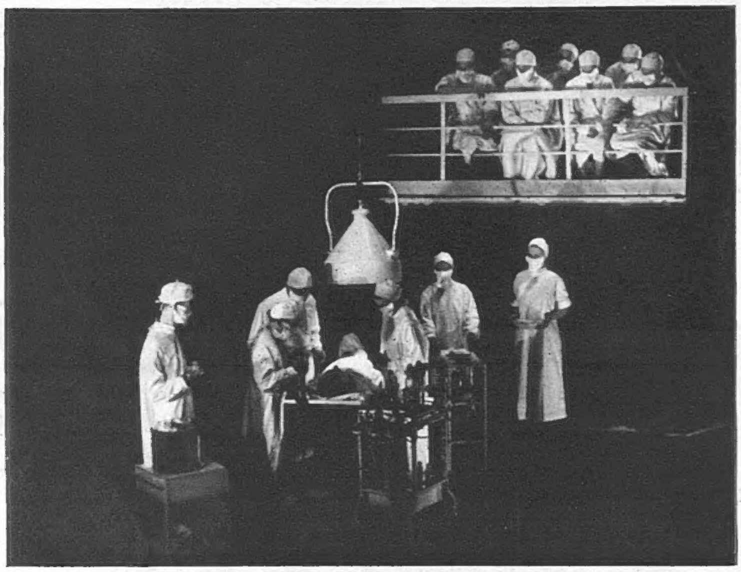
FROM THE PORTRAIT BY ANTHONY DEVAS.

STAGE CAMEOS.

By JOHN RUSSELL.

ENGLISH opera-productions have always suffered from the incapacity of even the best English singers to sing and act at the same moment. The act of singing appears to hold them fast, as if in a strait-jacket or diving-bell, and they allow themselves only such gestures as indicate their desperate desire to get out at whatever cost. The stage-picture at most English-speaking operas is one, in fact, from which sensitive persons traditionally avert their eyes; and it is, therefore, all the more gratifying to be able to say, of the production of "DON PASQUALE," at the Cambridge Theatre, that it is one which even a deaf audience would immoderately enjoy. This is, of course, due in large part to our Italian visitors, Mme. Alda Noni and M. Mariano Stabile. The vivacity, the wit, and the infectious passion of their acting is a theatrical treat of the highest order; as for their singing, Stabile remains the great master of the art on which Donizetti's enchantment relies, and Mme. Noni is his peer. This opera hangs largely, however, by the performance of the name-part; in this lengthy and crucial rôle Mr. Martin Lawrence scored a most notable and heartening success. Musically, the part is fantastically arduous; and the opera can be ruined if Don Pasquale tips over from comedy into rude farce. In such a case the occasion often draws out the man; and Mr. Lawrence's splendid and unflagging performance was plainly the admiration of his great companions as much as of the audience. As Ernesto, Mr. Andrew Macpherson showed himself a delicate light tenor, engagingly modest in his stage presence. As for the opera itself, even the academic philistinism of Grove's Dictionary admits it to be a masterpiece; and the whole production is one to which I would go willingly for every night of its run.

The comic parts of Dryden's "MARRIAGE A LA MODE" are of the same order of genius as "Don Pasquale"; in both cases the burning-glass of a great intelligence has focussed upon the more amiable failings of humanity and deliciously made fun of them. For myself, at least, I find no offence in Dryden's sunny libertinage, and vastly prefer it to the sneaking coarseness on which most English playwrights trade. At the St. James's Theatre his stately prose and its electrifying messages are delivered with a real sense of style by Mr. John Clements and Mr. Robert Eddison; and Miss Frances Rowe gives us that rare theatrical pleasure—the portrait of a beautiful and accomplished woman. With these three players, and occasionally with Miss Honor Shepherd, one felt that they might really have made up their magnificent lines for themselves; and (also rare) one begrudged every minute that they were not on the stage. Miss Kay Hammond's seductive doll was a success of a more ordinary sort. The sub-plot was manfully shouldered by Miss Moira Lister and Mr. David Peel, both of whom commanded our attention where they could hardly hope to command our pleasure.



In the operating theatre: with Mr. Wetheril (BILL SHINE); *Anæsthetist* (W. BARTLETT MULLINS); *Mr. Alderon* (CHARLES CAMERON); *Mr. Arcularis* (RAYMOND HUNTLEY); *Nurse Snell* (WENDA ROGERSON); *Nurse* (JOY HARINGTON); *Sister Hoyle* (JOAN HAYTHORNE). *"It's quite all right, Mr. Arcularis . . . there's nothing to fear. . . ." "Put the hand under the sheet. . . ."*

Few fortnights are so full as this; at other times I could dwell longer, for instance, upon the series of Irish plays (including two by the admired dramatist Mr. Lennox Robinson) at Walham Green, or upon the curious play at the Embassy, Hampstead, in which Mr. Monckton Hoffe reappears on our roster of playwrights. "GRIM FAIRY TALE" deals with the private life of a hangman, and, therefore, cannot be indicted for any lack of originality in its theme. Some excellent conjugal passages between Mr. Edward Chapman and Miss Leueen Macgrath showed Mr. Hoffe's old skill; later scenes of sexual diversions were not, in my view, a patch on Dryden, but a final burst of Grand Guignol effectively chilled our blood. In the purely intellectual theatre, the Arts revival of "THE APPLE CART" serves to bring back Mr. Jack Hawkins; this fine player, at once massive and nimble, returns from the war with his powder drier than ever, and we can ill spare him for his forthcoming tour of Central Europe.

"THE POLTERGEIST," at the Vaudeville, is memorably dim and flat in its dialogue, but has Mr. Gordon Harker to enliven us, and a third act of great mechanical ingenuity—a pocket dictionary, in fact, of psychic phenomena. Subtlest of actors, Mr. Austin Trevor had, in his simple surroundings, the appearance of a Channel swimmer confined to a hip-bath. At the Lyric, Hammersmith, "FEAR NO MORE" is also concerned with supernatural happenings; but this is by contrast an admirably intelligent play, if an imperfectly constructed one, and Mr. Raymond Huntley revels in his exacting, slightly incoherent rôle.

"Fear No More" (Lyric, Hammersmith), adapted from Conrad Aiken's short story "Mr. Arcularis," is a play of the subconscious guilt-conscious; Mr. Arcularis on the operating table; in convalescence; he's gone! L. to r.: Mr. Arcularis (RAYMOND HUNTLEY); *Diana Dean* (WENDA ROGERSON); *Ship's Officer* (DAVID DODIMEAD).

"THE OTHER SIDE," at the Comedy, is adapted from an intelligent, high-aiming novel by Storm Jameson. Half of it is spent, I found, in cutting and dealing the cards; and when the game does begin, it has to be compressed almost beyond recognition. As a play about occupied Germany, it is, I imagine, fairly veracious, but not at all enlightening. As a melodrama about the French widow of a German soldier, and her love for an English liaison officer, I thought it hasty and callow.

A chance visit to Palmer's Green located excellent qualities in Mr. Ronald Kerr's production of "THE SHINING HOUR," and also in his eager and responsive audience. The play cantered along at a tremendous pace, never pausing during its steep upward slope into melodrama.

MARTIN LAWRENCE *plays brilliantly the title-rôle in "Don Pasquale," at the Cambridge Theatre; is a bass of great ability. The opera is presented and sung in Italian.* ALDA NONI *plays Norina. Above, they study the score.*

PLAYS YOU MUST SEE: "WHILE THE SUN SHINES" (Globe). "THE FIRST GENTLEMAN" (Savoy). "UNDER THE COUNTER" (Phœnix). "SWEETEST AND LOWEST" (Ambassadors). "BIG BEN" (Adelphi).

PLAYS WELL WORTH SEEING: "HIGH TIME" (Palladium). "LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN" (Haymarket). "PERCHANCE TO DREAM" (Hippodrome). "THE NIGHT AND THE MUSIC" (Coliseum). "THE SHOP AT SLY CORNER" (St. Martin's). "IS YOUR HONEYMOON REALLY NECESSARY?" (Duke of York's). "FOLLOW THE GIRLS" (His Majesty's). "WORM'S EYE VIEW" (Whitehall). "THE GUINEA-PIG" (Criterion). "SONG OF NORWAY" (Palace). "FIFTY-FIFTY" (Strand). "BETTER LATE" (Garrick). "HERE COME THE BOYS" (Saville). "NO ROOM AT THE INN" (Winter Garden). "FRIEDA" (Westminster). "GANG SHOW" (Stoll). "THE KINGMAKER" alternating with "MARRIAGE A LA MODE" (St. James's). "THE WINSLOW BOY" (Lyric). "GRAND NATIONAL NIGHT" (Apollo). "CRIME AND PUNISHMENT" (New). "PICK-UP GIRL" (Prince of Wales). "DEAR MURDERER" (Aldwych). "LOVE GOES TO PRESS" (Duchess). "GAY ROSALINDA" (Princes). "THE POLTERGEIST" (Vaudeville). "SWEETHEART MINE" (Victoria Palace). "THE OTHER SIDE" (Comedy).

While every endeavour is made to keep this list up to date, we cannot hold ourselves responsible for any errors which may occur.

CINEMA CAMEOS.

By C. A. LEJEUNE.

In order to obviate impending quarrels between husband and wife, arguments with girl friend, bets with boy friend, and letters to the film critics, I hasten to record the fact that Catherine McLeod doesn't really play the music you see her play in "CONCERTO" (Gaumont and Marble Arch Pavilion). Arthur Rubinstein does, and pretty busy he is kept, too. Very early in "Concerto" the pianist heroine looks up from Beethoven's "Appassionata" to observe, "It goes on and on and on." By thunder! How right she is! It goes on and on and on for nearly two hours and a quarter, touching briefly on the works of Beethoven, Mozart, Bach, Mendelssohn, Wagner, Chopin and Rachmaninoff.

The heroine of "Concerto" is a simple country girl called Myra (Catherine McLeod), who falls under the spell of a pianist and conductor called Goronoff (Philip Dorn). Goronoff is a wolf. He affects sky-blue trousers, Paisley cravat, and a dove-grey velvet smoking-jacket. He is followed from capital to capital by a troupe of mobile blondes. When attending musical auditions he watches the way a girl pedals, instead of the way she uses her fingers. He observes to Myra, "You belong to green things and flowers," which the expert will recognise immediately as one of the subtler forms of lupine approach.

"Les Visiteurs du Soir" (Curzon), producer Marcel Carné, is a story of ironic fantasy; of mediæval diabolism. The Devil (JULES BERRY) *comes down to earth; proselytises Gilles* (ALAIN CUNY) *and devil-possessed Dominique, brilliantly played by Arletty. Gilles falls for Anne* (MARIE DEA), *breaks his pact with M. le Diable, who revengefully turns the pair into stone.*

But Myra is not as green as she seems. When Goronoff offers her two years' free piano tuition and a world tour, she accepts the offer without asking any tiresome questions. She is a girl who wants to get on in her profession, *bien entendu*. To her intense surprise and that of the audience, Goronoff behaves in a perfectly gentlemanly way, and even produces a sporting grandmother (Maria Ouspenskaya) to act as chaperon. This doesn't satisfy Myra in the least, and at the earliest possible opportunity she gets up on a concert platform, and, in the beautiful words of Synopsis, "lets the music speak her love" in Rachmaninoff's Second Piano Concerto. The results are startling. Love improves her execution to such an extent that Goronoff, at the conductor's desk, falls into a frenzy of professional jealousy. He tries to ruin his pupil's début by hissing "Crisper! Crisper!" and, playing all sorts of tricks with the tempo. When these fail, and Myra is acclaimed the greatest pianist in the world, he promptly sacks her, on the grounds that she has copied his style and technique.

"Night in Paradise" (Odeon), in Technicolor, stars MERLE OBERON *as the beautiful Delarai, Princess of Persia. Fiancée to Crœsus, wealthy King of Lydia, she returns the love of peace-ambassador Æsop, of Samos, played by Turhan Bey. On the eve of her wedding Delarai goes off to join Æsop; is chased by Crœsus in his war chariot; against unbelievable odds, love wins. Picture shows Delarai making herself beautiful for Æsop.*

This odd demonstration of musical temperament is followed by something even odder. Goronoff now finds himself unable to tackle a piano piece at all, unless Myra, back in her lonely farmhouse, sits down at her concert grand and plays the notes for him. Unhappily for Goronoff, a farming type called George (William Carter) turns up at this point and persuades Myra to marry him. This naturally curtails her musical activities. For sixteen years, or thereabouts, she never touches her piano, except to teach her daughter to play Rachmaninoff's Second. At the end of that time the child is ready for her début at Carnegie Hall, and half-an-hour before the concert Myra takes her along to Goronoff to hear his verdict on her playing. The verdict is unfavourable, so Myra takes her daughter's place at the piano, Goronoff imperiously waves away the conductor who has been engaged for the concert, and the two whale into the Second together, without any practice or rehearsal.

Since their object is clearly not to perform a piece of music, but to demonstrate which of them has the stronger personality, this lack of preparation is of little moment. It soon becomes plain that Myra is absolute mistress of the situation. By taking a number of short cuts, she finishes the concerto well ahead of schedule, and is out in the wings kissing her husband while Goronoff and the orchestra are still sweating away at Rachmaninoff. This extraordinary piece is described as "a Lavish Spectacle of Music and Romance, featuring Rachmaninoff's Second Piano Concerto and Other Musical Masterpieces." I have no doubt that it will be furiously successful with the sort of people who like their gems from the classics served up in limp suède covers.

Congratulations to Talbot Jennings and Sally Benson, who have written the screen-play of "ANNA AND THE KING OF SIAM" (New Gallery and Tivoli), and to Irene Dunne and Rex Harrison, who have interpreted it so warmly and wittily. Here is something that it is a pleasure to recommend; a film of good sense, good heart and good situations; a film that manages to be amusing and touching, unusual and familiar, intimate and impersonal, all at the same time.

"London Town" (Leicester Square, Aug. 29) is Britain's first Technicolor musical; starring SID FIELD, *comedian; with Tessie O'Shea, Greta Gynt, Sonnie Hale, Claude Hulbert; introduces* KAY KENDALL *in her first star rôle. Music, lyrics and some sets and costumes from the U.S.A. Produced and directed by Wesley Ruggles. Freddie Carpenter arranged the dances, including the new "'Ampstead Way" adapted from traditional coster dances.*

"Anna and the King of Siam" is adapted from Margaret Landon's biography of the British officer's widow, who went out to the East in the 1860's to teach the King of Siam's sixty-seven children. As played by Irene Dunne, this Mrs. Anna Owens is a lively, handsome and purposeful lady, with a strong sense of fitness and a redeeming sense of humour. Her sense of fitness insists that she should not grovel, either literally or metaphorically, to her employer, the Disc of Light around whom a thousand lesser lamps revolve. Her sense of humour makes her independent manner acceptable, and since it is combined with a wise head and a warm heart, she quickly becomes a personage of real importance at the Court of Siam. From teaching the King's sixty-seven children, she takes on the education of his 1000 wives, becomes His Majesty's confidential secretary, counsellor and friend, and helps to bring about many reforms in the laws and customs of the country.

The film is primarily a study of the relationship between two strong but not unsympathetic personalities, bound by widely different traditions, but equally eager for progress and enlightenment. There is never any hint of romance between Anna and her reluctantly barbaric employer, but the development of their friendship has its own sort of fascination. It was a shrewd stroke of casting to give these difficult parts to players with the light touch of Irene Dunne and Rex Harrison; the two work beautifully together, and their scenes form a complex pattern of pathos and comedy. To my mind, "Anna and the King of Siam" has only one serious flaw; the incident which involves Linda Darnell as the King's favourite. All this part of the picture seems to me banal and rather distasteful Hollywood hokum; the rest is delightful, stimulating and mature.

About "LES VISITEURS DU SOIR" (Curzon), I can only say that it begins with a high promise which it seems incapable of completely fulfilling. It is a legend about two damned and dedicated souls who are sent by the devil to play hell at a betrothal feast in a mediæval castle. The female soul (Arletty) remains faithful to her mission; the male (Alain Cuny) betrays it, and after a series of torments presented with some relish, finds love and salvation. There are some fine touches in the picture, and at any moment, you feel, imagination is going to break through the clouds. But alas! it doesn't.

THE HON. MRS. EDWARD PLEYDELL-BOUVERIE *and her son,* LORD MONTAGU OF BEAULIEU *(right), at the New Forest Agricultural Society's show at Lyndhurst. The ring was decorated with effigies of foxhounds.*

MISS ANN FORTUNE SMITH, *only daughter of Captain and Mrs. Eric Smith, Lower Ashfold, Slaugham, Sussex, is engaged to the Earl of Euston, eldest son of the Duke of Grafton.*

MISS MYRA WERNHER, *younger daughter of Major-General Sir Harold and Lady Zia Wernher, and granddaughter of the late Grand Duke Michael, is engaged to Captain David Butter, M.C., Scots Guards.*

SOCIAL SURVEY CARRIED OUT BY CAMERA:

H.E. THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR *and* LADY DIANA COOPER *opened the castle of Bois-Larris—a British gift to France—as an orphanage for 100 French boys and girls—children of soldiers of the 1939-45 fighting and of air-raid victims.*

PRINCESS ALIX OF LUXEMBURG *plays the accordion with skill and enthusiasm. She has been on a Scottish holiday with her parents, the Grand Duchess and Prince Felix of Luxemburg.*

COMMANDER HUGH S. MACKENZIE, D.S.O., D.S.C., *who commanded the submarine "Thrasher" on her famous Mediterranean patrols, married* MISS MAUREEN BRADISH-ELLAMES *at Holy Trinity, Brompton.*

LADY RATHCREEDAN, *formerly Miss Ann Bastian, was a smiling bride. Her marriage to Lord Rathcreedan took place in the Crypt Chapel of the House of Commons, and her mother, Mrs. William Bastian, gave her away.*

MRS. L. D. WILKINSON, *formerly Miss Sylvia Gater, wore a coronet of stephanotis at her wedding to Lieut.-Commander L. D. Wilkinson, R.N.V.R., son of Sir George and Lady Wilkinson.*

THE MARCHIONESS OF HARTINGTON, *daughter-in-law of the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire, presented the Barrow Challenge Cup for the best bull at the Bakewell Show to Mr. E. R. Thornley for his "Major Oswald."*

PEOPLE AND EVENTS OF THE WEEK.

At West Wycombe Park : LORD NEWALL, SIR JOHN DASHWOOD, BT., LADY NEWALL, MR. FRANCIS DASHWOOD, *who was celebrating his coming-of-age,* LADY DASHWOOD, MR. JOHN DASHWOOD, *and the* HON. MORYS *and* MRS. BRUCE.

MAJOR THE HON. JULIAN BERRY, *youngest son of Viscount Camrose, married* MISS D. ROWAN-THOMSON, *elder daughter of Major J. Leslie and Mrs. Rowan-Thomson, at St. George's, Hanover Square.*

H.R.H. PRINCESS MARGARET, *younger daughter of T.M. the King and Queen, is sixteen years old to-day, August 21. She is at Balmoral with their Majesties and Princess Elizabeth.* [PHOTOGRAPH BY STUDIO LISA.]

SWEDEN'S WATER-NYMPHS—*for dressing the ship quite ship-shape.*

WE TAKE OFF OUR HAT TO—

YOUNG girls representing WATER-NYMPHS decorated the rigging of the festival boat during recent festivities in honour of Sweden's eighteenth-century poet Carl Michael Bellman. Stockholmers in thousands streamed to Djurgarden where the show took place, a spot often frequented by the poet for picnics with his girl friend Ulla Winblad.

MAJOR RATU EDWARD THAKUMBAU, M.C., of Fiji, attended the Regency Ball at the Brighton Festival dressed in his own smart uniform, which included a *chic* double star-pointed skirt. Fashion-pundits please note.

NO orchids are offered to THE WINNING GUESSER of the ownership of those zipper shoes. It's Churchill of course. He was on a visit to Metz recently, and the gossip runs: wore an edge-to-edge morning coat, blue bow-tie with white spots; a "very Derby" top-hat; black leather shoes.

MRS. AGNES GRIFFIN, seventy-one-year-old grandmother, stroked her crew (including a forty-year-old daughter) to second place in a four-oared gig-race over a mile at Whitby regatta last week. Beaten by just over a length, rowing in easy style, Mrs. Griffin's crew was cheered all the way to the winning-post.

MAJOR RATU EDWARD THAKUMBAU, M.C.—*for giving us a new line in skirts.*

ARRIVING recently at Gothenburg, Sweden, for a holiday at home, THE GARBO "confessed to feeling tired." And this after a Hollywood holiday off-screen for—how many years? *We* feel a good deal more off-colour languishing for a sight of her on the screen again.

THE MAN WHO CAN GUESS *the ownership of these shoes.*

MRS. AGNES GRIFFIN—*for being a mettlesome grandmother able to stroke her crew to second place over a mile.*

GRETA GARBO—*for "feeling tired"—but not half so tired as we are of waiting to see her again.*

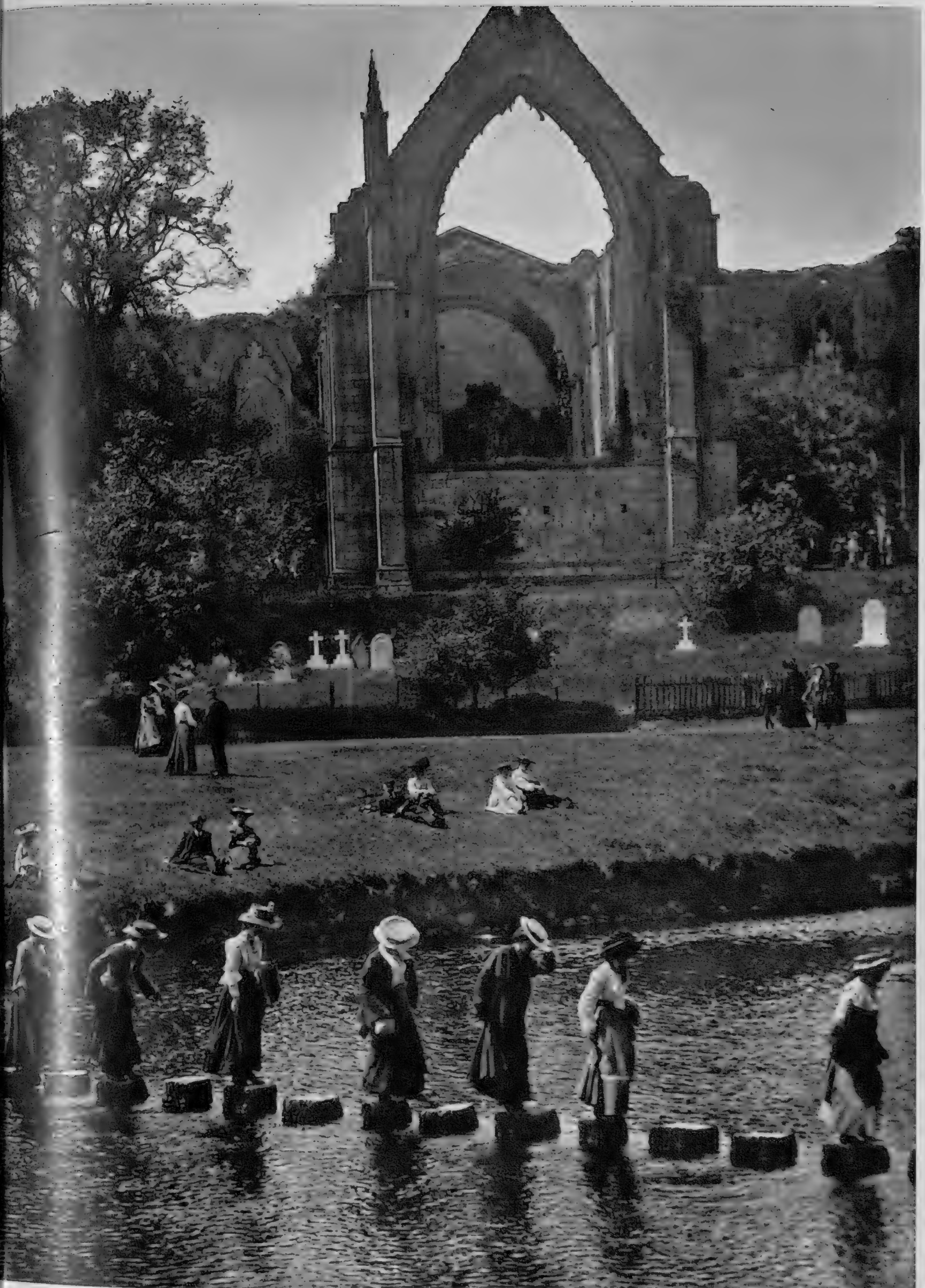
WIFE OF A SCOTTISH MARQUESS.

THE MARCHIONESS OF LOTHIAN *is the wife of the twelfth Marquess. She was Miss Antonella Newland, and is the only daughter of the late General Sir Foster Newland, K.C.M.G., C.B., and of Mrs. William Carr, and a granddaughter of the late General Count Salazar. Married in 1943, she has two children, the Earl of Ancrum, born last year, and Lady Mary Marianella Anne Kerr, who is a year older. She is an excellent musician and linguist and has a most charming personality. Lord Lothian, who is in the Scots Guards, succeeded his kinsman, the late Marquess, who was British Ambassador at Washington, 1939-40. His country seats are Monteviot, Ancrum, and Melbourne Hall, Derby.* [PHOTOGRAPH BY PEARL FREEMAN.]

A GREAT ADVENTURE FORTY-FIVE YEARS AGO.

YOU'D hardly guess that the crossing of THE STEPPING-STONES, BOLTON ABBEY, had been a great adventure in 1901, sartorially. But to the heavily-corseted woman of that day it was. She wore layers of lingerie of the thickest ("wool next the skin, my dear"); heavy, cumbersome skirts with an underlay of two or three petticoats down to the lace-up shoes. On top, secured to a top-head bun by long, dangerous pins clung solid hats, built to catch every passing breeze and hold it; to bowl you over. But Time has marched on, sartorially, and to-day's semi-dressed generation can hardly realise that in such a situation as this, to keep the balance, save themselves from watery immersion, these heroines went through quite an ordeal. No. 6 from the right is definitely insecure; apprehensive. Bolton Abbey ruins are on the estate of the Duke of Devonshire. Centre of the picture may be seen a corner of Bolton Hall where the Duke entertains his friends for the grouse-shooting.

N.B. A Coloured plate is inserted in this issue.



SARAH CHURCHILL—BACK TO THE LIMELIGHT IN "GASLIGHT."

MISS SARAH CHURCHILL, *actress daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Winston Churchill, has returned to her stage career. She was recently heard on the air, and is now playing in "Gaslight" on tour. During the war she served in the W.A.A.F.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY HARLIP.

CHASE FOR A WAR CRIMINAL: "THE STRANGER" WITH ORSON WELLES.

Mr. Potter (BILLY HOUSE) *begins to suspect that all is not well when Professor Rankin* (ORSON WELLES) *dashes in at a late hour, buys drugs in a hurry, and goes off without paying.*

Right: Detective Wilson (EDWARD G. ROBINSON) *meets Professor Rankin* (ORSON WELLES) *with his beautiful young wife Mary* (LORETTA YOUNG), *and feels convinced that he has found his quarry.*

Just in time! Wilson (EDWARD G. ROBINSON), *now sure of his man, tracks him down to the church clock-tower and finds that the "Professor"* (ORSON WELLES) *is about to murder his wife* (LORETTA YOUNG).

Noah Longstreet (RICHARD LONG) *finds Mary's beautiful setter, Red, done to death in the woods, and vows vengeance on the man responsible for this crime.*

"THE STRANGER," new International picture directed by Orson Welles, is due at the Gaumont, Haymarket, and the Marble Arch Pavilion on August 25. It's a good entertainment thriller concerned with the tracking down of a Nazi criminal. Edward G. Robinson, as the sleuth, hard on the tracks of Kindler, meets the charming and brilliant young Professor Rankin, who has just married Mary Longstreet, daughter of Judge Longstreet. He feels that everything is not what it seems, and he slowly and carefully follows up every clue until he is certain of his man. The climax of the tale is played out in the lofty clock-tower of a Connecticut church. The masquerading Nazi is revealed in his true colours, and his beautiful young wife has a narrow—very narrow—escape.

The end of a notorious war criminal: the so-called Professor Rankin (ORSON WELLES) *plunges headlong to his death from the top of the church clock-tower.*

La Belle (JOSETTE DAY), *whose true love and purity of heart succeed in breaking the spell and transforming La Bête into a noble Prince.*

In a setting suggestive of a Vermeer in all luminous and mother-of-pearl light; La Belle in her wedding-dress and crown.

"LA BELLE ET LA BÊTE," Jean Cocteau's beautiful, sensitive and poetic film version of the classic fairy-tale, Beauty and the Beast, had a brilliant private showing at the Colisée Cinema in Paris, preceded by a garden-party in the grounds of M. André Paulwé's palatial building in the Rue la Boëtie. The picture, which had René Clement as technical director, justifies Cocteau's theory that the film is the only medium which can convincingly maintain a balance between the Real and the Imaginary. La Bête, the Beast, is human in so far as he suffers anguish after giving way to his bestial lust for blood, and the emotional impact of the film is very strong in his sequences. La Belle, Beauty, is a lovely figure in exquisite bejewelled dresses, who weeps diamonds for tears, and has such faith and perception that she is able to love and believe in the human side of La Bête—and thus to ransom him.

The Merchant, father of La Belle (MARCEL ANDRÉ), *in La Bête's castle, where the service is performed by disembodied hands.*

La Bête, the Beast (JEAN MARAIS), *has given way to animal lust to kill. His passion assuaged, he rememb that he was once a man and suffers terrible remorse.*

The Beast, entranced by the loveliness and innocence of La Belle, stoops and drinks a draught of pure water from her hands.

Beauty's true love and trust have broken the spell, and the Beast has become a noble and handsome young man again—a worthy object for her devotion.

BREATH-TAKING FILM OF BEAUTY AND THE BEAS

True love dares all! La Belle (JOSETTE DAY) receives a kiss from La Bête without flinching—and lo and behold, he becomes a Man once more, for her faith has broken the ugly spell which bound him.

JEAN COCTEAU'S EXQUISITE FAIRY-TALE PICTURE.

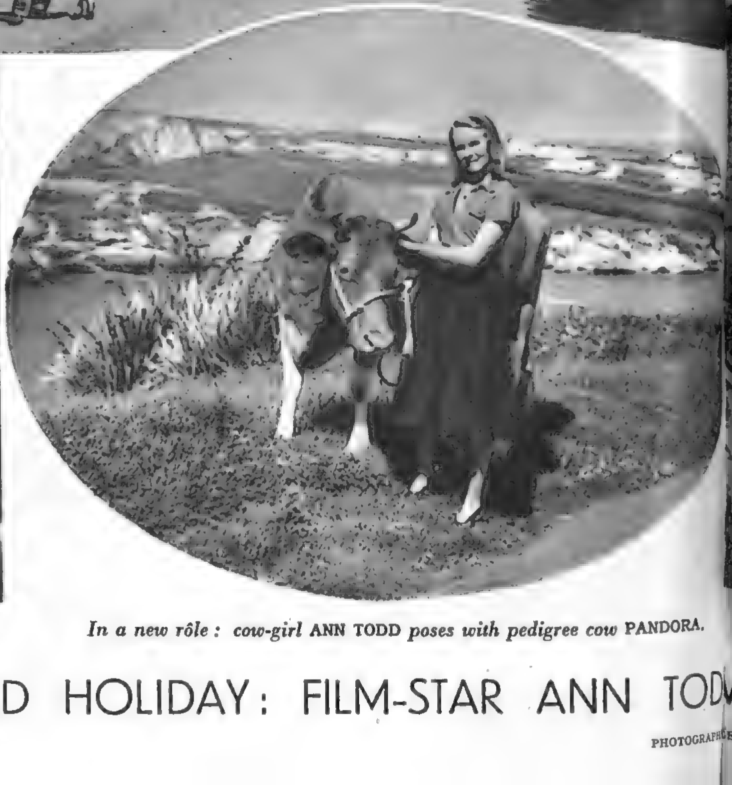
At the doorway of the Tangye family home, Glendorgal: film-star ANN TODD its châtelaine.

The drawing-room. Over the fireplace is the portrait of Lady Tangye, wife of Sir Richard Tangye, the grandfather of Ann's husband Nigel.

ON August 27 ANN TODD is due to sail for Hollywood with her husband in the *Queen Mary*, to take up the £250,000 contract she won as a result of her performance in "The Seventh Veil." The agreement spreads over five to seven years, during which time fourteen pictures are to be made in Britain and Hollywood. She will first play opposite Gregory Peck in a Hitchcock-Selznick film. Before leaving for the glittering Film City, Ann and her husband Nigel Tangye took a holiday at Glendorgal, St. Columb Minor, Cornwall, the home of the Tangye family for nearly 100 years. They have two children.

Right: Connubial. ANN TODD with her husband NIGEL TANGYE and Peter, outside Glendorgal.

Duet. What are MR. and MRS. NIGEL TANGYE planning at the grand piano?



In a new rôle: cow-girl ANN TODD poses with pedigree cow PANDORA.

PRE-HOLLYWOOD HOLIDAY: FILM-STAR ANN TOD

PHOTOGRAPHS O

NIGEL TANGYE *and* ANN TODD *on the Point at Glendorgal with Peter. In the background is the island of Trevelgue, opposite Porth.*

On the rocks at Glendorgal with Peter. The grounds have six acres of coast-line, which Nigel Tangye is trying to cultivate.

VITH HUSBAND NIGEL TANGYE IN CORNWALL.

RGE W. F. ELLIS.

THE LITERARY LOUNGER.

By L. P. HARTLEY.

"THE SCARLET TREE" is the second volume of Sir Osbert Sitwell's autobiography. The title may make one wonder. What tree is this? An exotic tree, possibly Chinese? A bibelot, a model, made of coral, perhaps, or sealing-wax? A family tree with the parent stem picked out in red? Sir Osbert's tree is none of these. It is "the blood, that fragile, scarlet tree we carry within us." Ancestral blood flows, no doubt, in the sap of this tree; but the meaning of the title, so eloquently illustrated by the design on the jacket, is that in these memories the author is not drawing entirely, or even chiefly, on the experiences of his mind; it is the experience of his whole organism—senses, nerves, blood, as well as brain, that he is calling into play. He means what Wordsworth meant when he wrote of something as "felt along the blood."

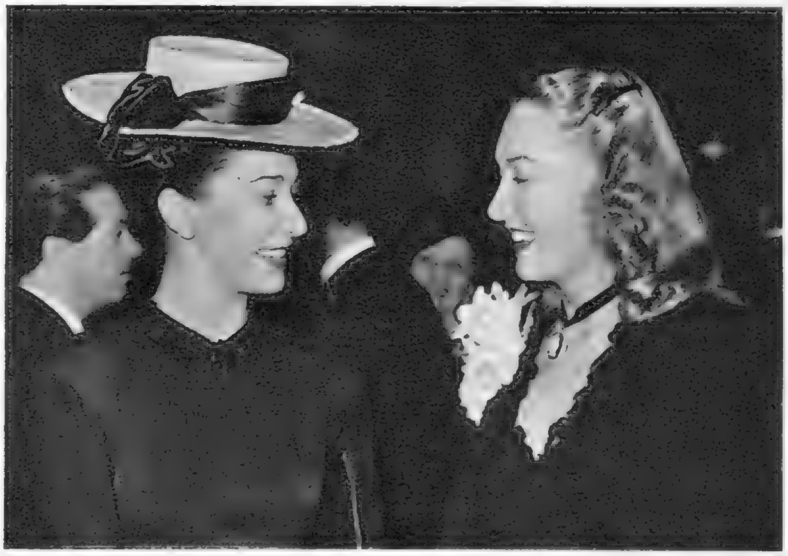
Thinking Sensuously. Commenting on the age-old contrast between Florence and Venice, Sir Osbert observes:

Never . . . did I feel in Florence that same contentment tinged with wonder that always came to me in Venice—because, no doubt, my mind tends to be fleshly, or at any rate sensuous; I prefer painting to sculpture, velvet to sackcloth, jewels to bones, the canvases of Rubens to the agonised mystics and saints, spread-eagled on dark panels, of Spain.

From this habit of thinking sensuously Sir Osbert's book derives its richness of texture; its preference for curves, harmonies and gradual changes, to angles, discords and abrupt contrasts; its freedom from dogmatism, as distinct from prejudice (the author has many prejudices and wears them happily on his sleeve); its liking for things that grow—from tradition, from the earth, or from the complex, slowly maturing vintage of the artist's inspiration; its distrust of those that are manufactured in a night by the naked mind of man independently and often to the damage of his other faculties—the "isms" with which two world wars have made us only too familiar.

This does not mean that he has not suffered. Seven to seventeen is a formative period, and for any sensitive person a time of suffering. Sir Osbert suffered at both his preparatory schools:

In return for the large fees received, the school restored to my parents a different boy, unrecognisable, with no pride in his appearance, no ability to concentrate, with health impaired for many years, if not for life, secretive, with no love of books and an impartial hatred for both work and games, with few qualities left and none acquired, save a love of solitude and a cynical disbelief, firmly established, in any sense of fair play or prevailing standard of humane conduct.



At a reception of ballet stars held at the Savoy MARGOT FONTEYN *talked to* IRINA BARONOVA, *who is to star with Leonide Massine in "A Bullet in the Ballet," the forthcoming dramatisation by Caryl Brahms and S. J. Simon of their amusing novel. Two or three ballets are included; the dancers will have speaking parts.*

The Gateway to Freedom. One school left him with a prolonged nervous illness, and he was not particularly happy at Eton. But the illness, which taught him to think and imagine along his own lines, was really the gateway to freedom; it undid what school had done. He was abroad but surrounded by home influence—the mother who (negligently and forgetfully, perhaps) adored him; the father whose cast of mind was so different from his but whose criticism and advice ("Such a pity! . . . Such a good idea! . . .") were stimulating and to whom he owed his love of Italy; the sister and brother to whom he was bound by ties stronger than those of blood; and Henry Moat, his father's servant, an ex-sailor from the Yorkshire coast, an inspired letter-writer and inveterate humorist (as witness his request, when ill in Italy, "to be buried with feet in the direction of Whitby."

And so, although there are many passages in "The Scarlet Tree" which bring tears to one's eyes (as when the little boy, miserably homesick, begs his mother to "write in a rounder hand"), the sunshine outlasts the shadow and the prevailing tone is almost as sanguine as the title. For one thing, Sir Osbert presently became convinced of his ability to hit back; for another, he was avid of all experience (except experience of school). Already his mind was turning into poetry the many diverse backgrounds against which he had been flung: the pious and godly life with his Sitwell grandmother and his aunts at Gosden; the simple and rustic life, which included a first love, with cousins in an Oxfordshire village; and the grand, formal Christmases, which he looked forward to with dread, at Blankney, Lord Londesborough's country house in Lincolnshire.

All these are unforgettably described. Sir Osbert has never written with a mellower tone, a more engaging candour, a richer humanity, or a sharper eye for the detail which stands out by its own quality—strangeness, silliness, beauty, humour, pathos—and yet is indicative of the whole. And running through the book, sustaining the writer and reconciling him to much that annoys and hurts, is his awareness of the artist's calling and of the artist's obligation to suffer for his gifts.

Distinguished Short Stories. Until I came across this collected volume of his short stories, Mr. T. O. Beachcroft was a writer of whose work I knew little. It was a loss, a serious loss, and one I have greatly enjoyed repairing, for here is an author of distinction, without mannerisms, without affectations, with few prejudices, but with exacting standards of value, both for art and for life. This book contains practically all the stories he has written and enables us to make some estimate of his powers.

He has, one must admit it, a good deal of sympathy for the Common Man, that abstraction who was the hero of the later nineteen-thirties, and the centre of a cult which has not, perhaps, very much to show for itself—at least from the artistic point of view; for it put quantity before quality, and implied, if it did not state, that a lowest common denominator was to be preferred to a highest common factor, and that there was something priggish and anti-social in being, or doing, something more than the average man had it in him to be or do. It was a doctrine inspired a good deal by laziness and a little by envy; you must not be superior in any way to me, because if you are I shall suffer from envy, and that will be unfair to me. Therefore, if you have any exceptional gifts, for Heaven's sake hide them; they are pernicious if they make a man stand out from among his fellows.

The Bane of Success. As a reaction against the worship of success this attitude had its uses, but it was pressed too far until it almost became a protest against the desire to excel, surely one of the most valuable of human impulses. But Mr. Beachcroft, in so far as he accepts it, accepts it with reservation and discrimination. For instance, he tells a subtle and moving story of some parents who had made considerable sacrifices to send their boy to a good private school. They are getting on in years, but not in the world; he has just missed a good job, her clothes are old-fashioned. They arrive at a school function to find all the talk is about a successful boy called Horsley; their own boy, a nice, diffident lad, fails to win the half-mile and the reading prize, both of which Horsley annexes. Without exaggerating (Mr. Beachcroft never exaggerates) he makes it quite clear that the reading prize should have gone to Bill, instead of to his showier and more popular rival; for he was moved by the lovely passage he read, instead of declaiming it in a mood of brazen self-confidence. And in many other stories Mr. Beachcroft shows that his sympathies are with the under-dog, with the man unemployed through no fault of his own, who takes to crime, perhaps, or falls into hopeless depression.

Mr. Beachcroft, then, is anti-success; he regards success as "showy"; and the showy, the spurious, the grave sin of writing for effect, are faults from which his work is absolutely free. He lets emotion come through, he never forces it. If anything, he under-states, he under-dramatises; his æsthetic conscience is almost too scrupulous. It is significant that, in the story entitled "You Must Break Out Sometimes," the act of breaking-out means to commit a crime. Mr. Beachcroft never breaks out, never loses that sense of competing issues which keeps his judgment perpetually poised. Many of these issues are delicate as gossamer, yet they all enrich, they all help towards stabilisation.

Like other writers, Mr. Beachcroft is not always at the top of his form, and when he is not his writing is somewhat flat and fumbling; but even then it is genuine, and not overlaid with a false glitter.

Charming but Careless. The Charles Century Advertising Agency occupied the fortieth, forty-first and forty-second floors of a New York building, and an impression of height and of wide views over the city remains long after the mystery has wound its way to a satisfactory, if not inspired, conclusion.

Mimi Ellsworth, woman advertising copywriter, was endowed by nature with wit and charm, but the good fairy who should have bestowed discretion and common sense did not arrive at the christening. Consequently, Mimi gives us delicious pictures of her fellow-labourers, and the unfortunate detective some anxious moments when he is trying to prevent her from adding one more to the formidable list of corpses. "Suitable for Framing" is written with energy and spirit, and although enveloping horror and the weight of plot and clue clip Miss Holbrook's wings to some extent, nevertheless, she keeps the story moving almost as fast as the drinks, and on just the perfect note for holiday reading.

BOOKS REVIEWED.

The Scarlet Tree. By Osbert Sitwell. (*Macmillan; 15s.*)
Collected Stories. By T. O. Beachcroft. (*The Bodley Head; 10s. 6d.*)
Suitable for Framing. By Marion Holbrook. (*Cassell; 8s. 6d.*)

Pin-up Girl:
No. 59. Sylvia Sidney

SYLVIA SIDNEY, *one of Hollywood's most accomplished dramatic players, stars with Robert Young and Ann Richards in "The Searching Wind" at the Carlton, Haymarket. Based on Lilian Hellman's provocative Broadway play of the same title, it involves a triangular love-story against the background of recent history-making world events. The picture shows her as Congresswoman Chase in "Mr. Ace," due to be presented at the London Pavilion by United Artists on August 23.*

LOVERS' KNOT.*

By NORAH BURKE.

ELECTRIC WHISKERS was her second husband, and Vicky was just beginning to suspect his motives. On this particular morning, when he 'd opened three or four penny-stamped envelopes and said "Damn!" to each, she thought, "Now I 'll find out why he married me. I 'll find out *now*."

And Vicky was a clever woman. Thin, smart, witty and informed. Your first impression of her was one of extreme neatness—neat, dark hair, printed navy crêpe-de-chine frock, a diamond wrist-watch. Well known, of course: débutantes copied her clothes. And a distinguished London hostess. One of those women who don't photograph, though: the flashlight ones of her, at charity balls and things, made her face so black-and-white, when she needed pink.

"There 's no getting away from it," she thought. "I 'm forty-five, and I 've got a lot of money."

Indeed, it showed everywhere. Well, Bokhara carpet, and a good one; corner cabinet full of Tz'u Chou, and that. Roses like Devonshire cream—absolutely dozens of them, and it wasn't yet June. Chars were five bob an hour, too. True, the flat was high up, but only because she liked the sky. You could see all across London, from the ruined square below, with its rock-plants and blitz weed and prefabs., to the herring-bone of the car park, and over the disappearing multitude of roofs in the golden gauze of a spring morning.

Across the little dented oak table, the Georgian silver, the coffee, the cream, even, she asked, "What 's the matter?"

"I never get anything but bills."

"Well, mine was only an income-tax notice."

He looked up. He was a big, ginger-blue man—great flaming moustaches and sapphire-blue eyes—and he had the charm of the spendthrift, a certain inconsequent dash. He was about her own age—oh, she hadn't baby-snatched.

She arranged some words. Then she said, "But, Rex, I thought everything had been settled. Is there something else? What are these?"

He tossed them over. First she noted their dates; and then that the total, at which she arrived instantaneously, was larger than the very generous sum—half of her income—which her bank transferred to his account every month.

"Oh, I see, they 're new ones. Well, I suppose they won't mind waiting till next month." And she handed them back.

He didn't take them back. He left them on the table. He lit a cigarette, and he said, "I like that frock. Navy suits you. Not everyone can wear it, you know. Specially brunettes. Your hair 's so marvellous, too. Not a single white one."

She looked at him levelly. "Oh, but there are. You don't imagine I 'd go grey when I needn't? They were awfully short of stuff during the war, but it 's better already. Oh, I don't mind who knows. It 's no worse than lipstick."

He recovered. "You 're a wonderful woman, Vicky. You tell people your real age and that your hair 's dyed, and it makes not a scrap of difference. Men still want you. No matter what girls are in the room, in half an hour all the men are standing round you."

It was true, and it was because of that that she had let herself be flattered into believing that this man really did want to marry her. Men did like her. They found her fascinating—they always would. Not only for the drinks she could give them, either, or because she 'd got a car and a flat in town. Her wit, her poise, her experience. She knew every place in town, and everybody. There wasn't anywhere that she didn't know who ran it, and exactly where the bar was, and the grill-room and everything.

She was lucky to have an excellent, a cross-filed memory for names as well as faces and facts; and could lay hands on the word she wanted without stopping to rummage for it. She could sustain an intelligent conversation on anything from T. S. Eliot to the second battle of Narvik.

Men liked her. When she was twenty, she had thought thirty would finish it; at thirty she supposed it would be forty; and just now she was beginning to suspect that there was no such thing as a peaceful old age.

Oh, yes, men liked her. They stood round her and talked horses with each other. They kept a foot on the bar of her stool. They made excuses to touch her. But now . . .

"What," she asked, "are you trying to get out of me?"

He got up, he came round to her and kissed her very pleasantly. The red whiskers prickled rather nicely, and just for a moment excitement twinged through her, but she deciphered it and disciplined it. "Well?"

"I 'm not trying to get anything out of you."

"D 'you want me to pay those bills?"

"Oh, Vicky——" he protested feebly.

"Is that what you want?"

"Well, they 'll have to wait if you don't, and one of them 's Haddington, that saddler chap who——"

"I know, I know." Rex reminding *her* who Haddington was! When her family had dealt with the little Norfolk saddler since the days when everyone knew the difference between a phaeton and a brougham. No; Haddington should not wait for his money.

She avoided a second kiss. It died of inattention in mid-air. "I suppose these aren't the only bills?"

"Well——"

"Look, Rex. I tried to arrange it so you wouldn't ever have to come to me for cash, or take money at my hands. I arranged everything through the bank. This sort of talk 's no fun to either of us, is it? Aren't I giving you enough, or what?"

"Matter of fact, you 'd hardly notice it if you paid these, would you?"

"That 's not the point. I don't want you to have to come to me for money. We did go through all this before, you know, and you said it would be ample."

"Yes, but just this once," he argued irritably.

"We divided the income and the expenses. I manage to live inside my share, and I must ask you to do the same."

"Well, I can't, and that 's that. A man 's bound to spend more than a woman."

"Then I must be plain with you——" she began.

His chair creaked indignantly. He was beginning to lose his temper—a thing that gave him no trouble at all. "Translated, that means rude, I suppose—plain speaking usually spells rudeness—and damn mean. Rich people often are mean, and you 're no exception."

"Then I 'll accuse you direct of marrying me for my money."

There was a wafer-like pause before he denied it determinedly. "Certainly not."

"Why did you marry me, Rex?"

"You answer first. Why did you marry me?"

"Because I thought you loved me; I liked you, I was lonely; and also, I suppose," she admitted, "I was flattered by the chance to make a second marriage at my age." And she said, "*I am not going to pay those bills.*"

He flushed up violently, just like he sunburned easily.

"So now," she continued, "tell me why you married me. The truth. Was it for my money?"

Temper triumphed over caution. "All right, it was, you shrew. Yes, it was. So what?"

"Quite a lot of what," she replied evenly, but feeling a bit sick, as if his words had been too much pink jelly. "Since that 's the way it is, the sooner we 're divorced, the better." She could see right into the sapphire-blue eyes now to the thoughts behind them.

"Oh, you don't get out of it so easily as all that," he assured her creamily, and sort of digging himself into the chair. "Yes, I married you for your money—of course I did. You don't imagine I 'd tie myself to a middle-aged wife unless, do you? And you never saw through it, did you? Remember some of the things I said? Of course I married you for your money. What else? I 'd been floating around so long, making excuses and excuses not to pay and not to pay, and then pulling up my roots every now and then when a place got too full of bills. Leaving a blank address. You know. Or perhaps you don't. Well, then you came along. A plum. I sat down on velvet, and that 's where I mean to stay."

"You won't agree to a divorce, even if I make it worth your while?"

"You couldn't make it worth my while, unless I got the lot, which I can't see you doing."

"You must, at any rate, leave the flat to-day."

"I don't think so."

"I shall refuse to pay your bills."

"I shall deal only with those firms which trust your family."

Vicky sat looking at the table, at the batch of bills and things. She picked up her own letter.

"You wouldn't ever divorce me," he was saying, "because it 's not flattering to someone your age. Everyone 'll know why. You 'll go on keeping me and you 'll like it."

She smiled tranquilly. "You 're wrong, you know. I don't care who knows if I dye my hair or discard a husband. I couldn't care less. I shall cancel my banker's order to you, I shall not pay your debts, I shall warn my old friends not to let you run up bills."

She could see him thinking that, presently, if he went on living here, she 'd be obliged to pay. How little he knew her. How little.

"And about a divorce——" she continued, coming to the final minute on the agenda.

"H'h! You can't get that."

"Can't I?" She tossed her letter over. "You can deal with this in future, then."

"What the hell! It 's your income tax."

"Perfectly correct," she agreed, getting up, finishing the interview. "I 'm now going out. When I come back, I expect you to be gone. If you refuse me a divorce, you must remember that I have a considerable income from a large number of sources. I pay nineteen-and-six in the pound. You married me for my money, and a husband is liable for his wife's income tax."

THE END.

**All the characters and incidents in this story are imaginary.*

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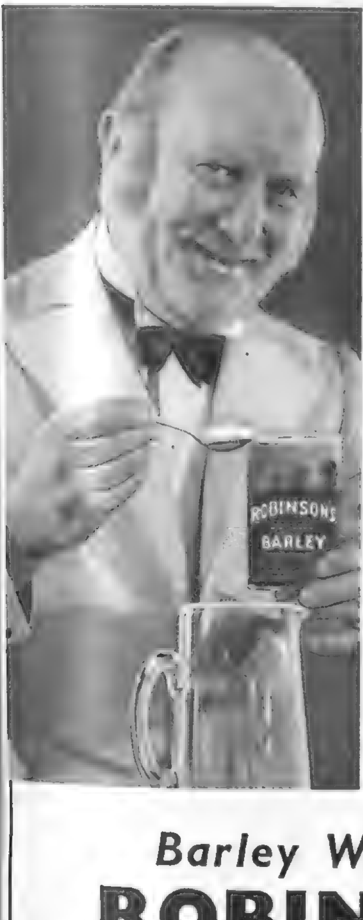

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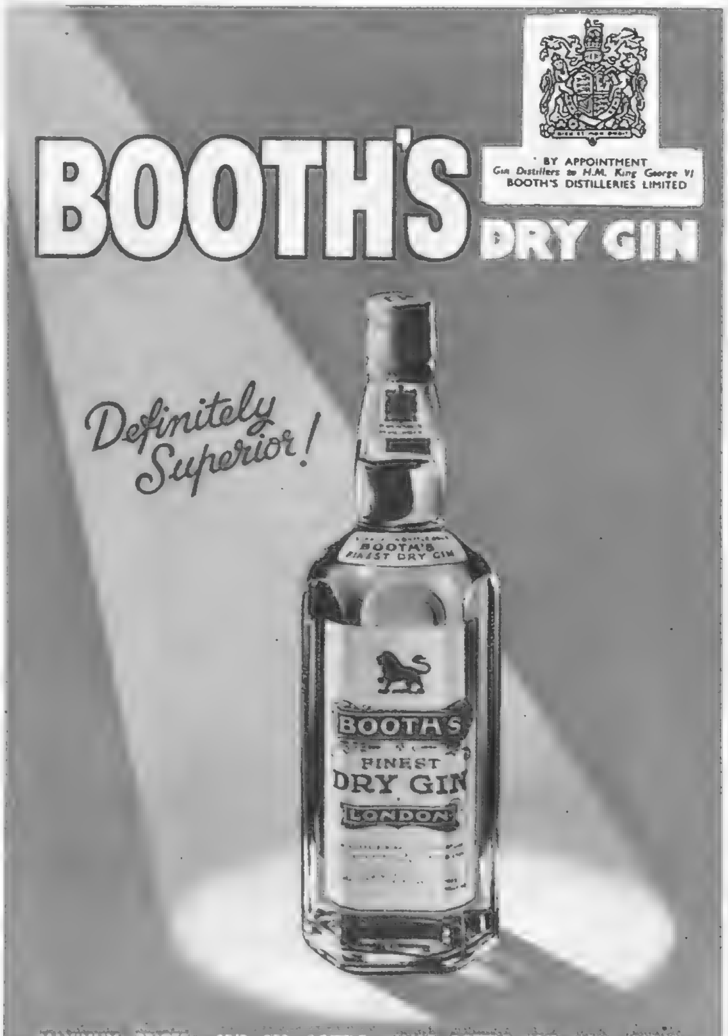

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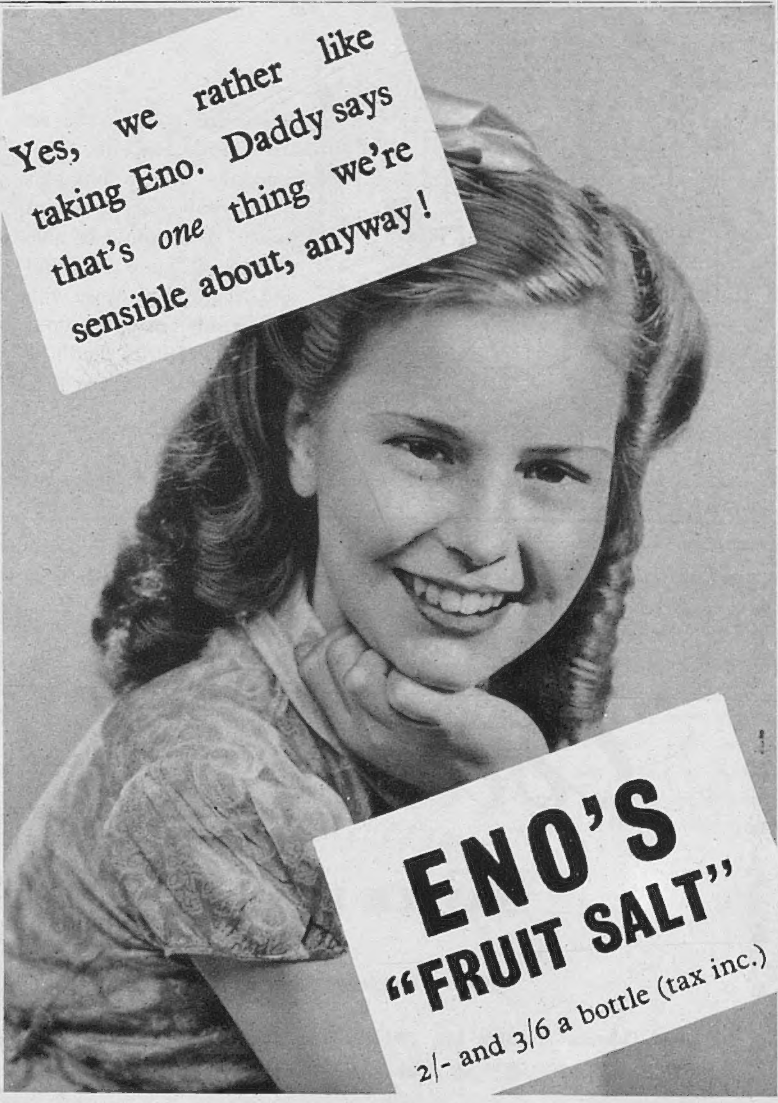

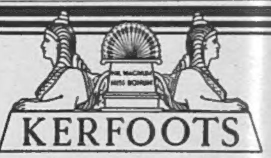

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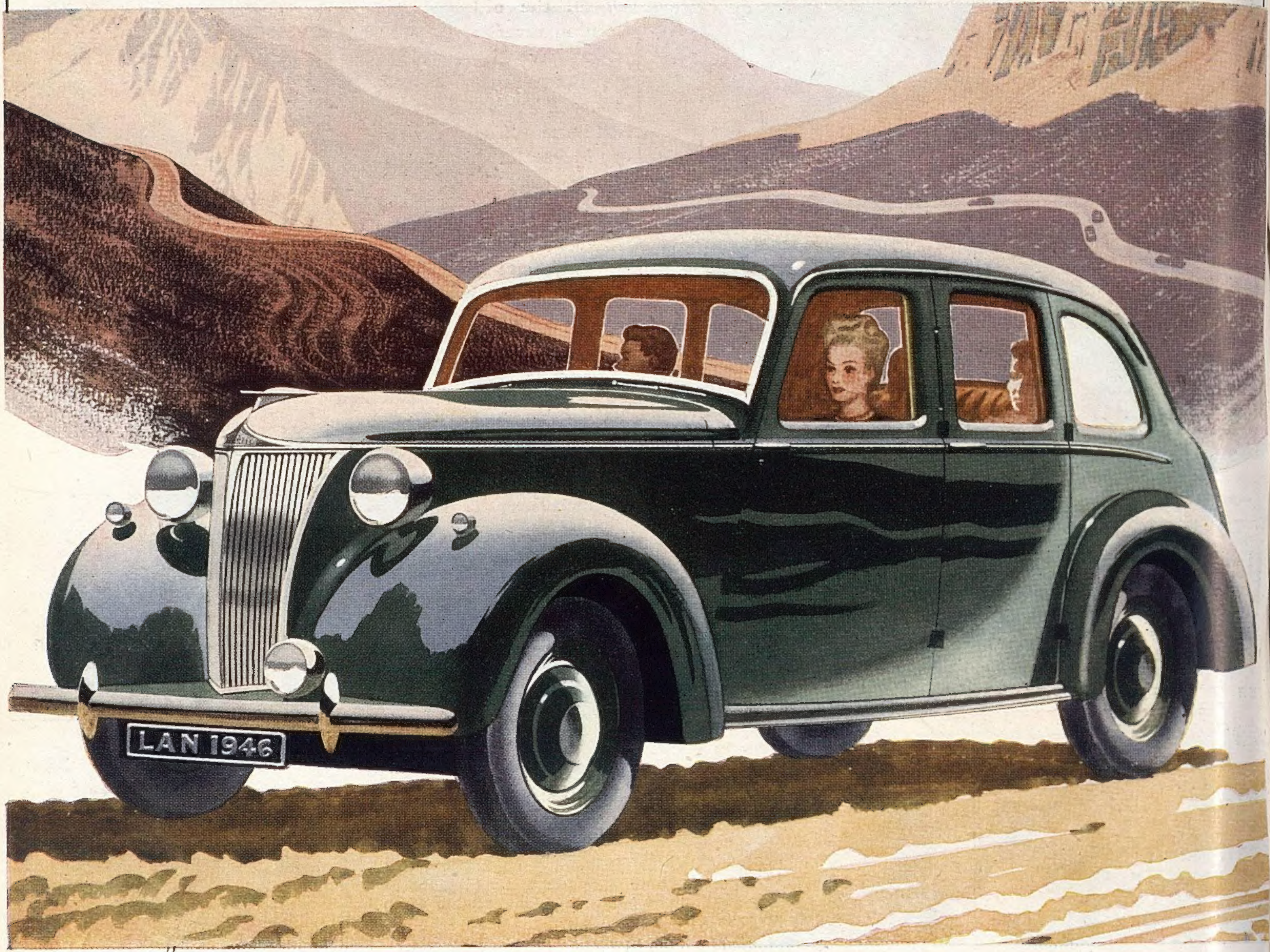

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